ERIC Document Resume	See Instruction Sheet	DATE OF RESUME	DATE RECEIVED

A. PUBLICATION DATA

1. ERIC NUMBER	2. ORIGINATOR CONTROL NO(S).	3. IDENTIFICATION NO.	DO NOT WRITE IN SPACE BELOW
ED002057	NA	NA	

4. AUTHOR(S): Muse, Benjamin

5. TITLE OF DOCUMENT ABSTRACTED: Memphis

6. PUBLICATION TITLE: NA

MICROFILM COPY AVAILABLE: YES ☒ NO ☐

COPYRIGHT GRANTED: YES ☐ NO ☒

COPYRIGHT RELEASE FILED: YES ☐ NO ☐

TYPE OF REPORT: PROPOSAL ☐ IN-PROGRESS ☒ FINAL ☐ FOLLOW-UP ☐

OTHER ERIC REFERENCES:

7. EDITOR(S): NA

8. PLACE OF ORIGIN: Southern Regional Council
ORG.
ST. 5 Forsyth Street, N.W.
CITY, STATE Atlanta 3, Georgia
TELE. EXT.
INST/LOC CODE

9. PUBLISHER OR SOURCE: Southern Regional Council, 5 Forsyth St., N.W., Atlanta 3, Georgia

10. VOL.	11. PAGES	12. MO./YR.	13. TOTAL PP.
NA	NA		49

ERIC SATELLITE CODE

B. INDEXING DATA

14. SUBJECT AREA

15. TYPE OF ENDEAVOR: report

16. INDEXING TERMS (6-12)

school desegregation	news media	NAACP	
equal employment opportunity	police action	biracial committee	
desegregated public facilities	elected city officials		
	Negro leadership		

17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In view of its heavy Negro population and its Deep South location, the progress of Memphis toward the elimination of race discrimination is remarkable. Conspicuous, though still token, strides toward desegregation and equality in schools and employment have been made. Greater progress has been seen in the desegregation of public cultural and recreational facilities and of public accommodations. A dozen Negroes sit on official boards or hold other responsible positions in the city government.

Several basic factors contribute to the forward momentum of desegregation in Memphis. The large Negro vote tends to liberalize all decisions by public officials in matters affecting Negroes. The high caliber of leaders in the white community who are active in the movement is another positive force. Another major factor is the strong unity within the Negro community. The Memphis branch of the NAACP boasts the largest membership in any Southern city. Perhaps the strongest element of unity in Memphis is the Committee on Community Relations. This biracial agency includes strong representations from the Chamber of Commerce, churches, business and professional groups, civic organizations, the Urban League, and the NAACP. A rigid police force policy largely and favorably identified with the civil rights advance and two local newspapers which follow a policy of cooperation and encouragement in the campaign are other positive factors.

ERIC No.

18. SOURCE OF ABSTRACT

C. FUNDING DATA

19. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	20. DIVISION OR DEPT.	21. CONTRACT NO. / PROJECT NO.
	22. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT	
	23. DURATION OF PROJECT	U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Office of Education

ERIC Form 1

TENNESSEE--MEMPHIS

Mus

SPECIAL REPORT

ED002057

SOUTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

5 Forsyth Street, N.W., Atlanta 3, Georgia

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MEMPHIS

BY

BENJAMIN MUSE

POPULATION

	1950		1960	
	Memphis	Shelby County*	Memphis	Shelby County*
Total	396,000	482,393	497,524	627,019
Negro	147,141	180,002	184,320	227,445
Percent, Negro	37.2	37.3	37.0	36.3

General

In view of its heavy Negro population and its Deep South location, the progress of Memphis toward the elimination of race discrimination is remarkable. Memphis lies only eight miles north of the Mississippi line; it is the metropolis of a large northern section of that state. Memphis is the apex of a strip of country along the Mississippi River, with Vicksburg at its southern extremity, known as "The Delta." The Delta is one of the regions of deepest anti-Negro prejudice and most stubborn resistance to change in the South. Memphis State University, which, without

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*The metropolitan area of Memphis comprises all of Shelby County.

incident, has enrolled 250 Negro students along with whites, is only 60 miles from stormy "Ole Miss."

Memphis has made conspicuous, though still token, strides toward desegregation and equality of treatment in schools and employment. In the desegregation of public cultural and recreational facilities, of places of amusement and of public accommodation, Memphis desegregation has gone well beyond the token stage. A dozen Negroes sit on official boards or hold other responsible positions in the city government. Furthermore, the movement toward equality of opportunity in Memphis is going forward with increasing momentum and with the support of the dominant white leadership and the approval of a large element of the white public.

The traditionally large Negro vote in Memphis, always present in the calculations of the political confraternity, has done much to lubricate the wheels of race-relations reform in that city. Negroes have been encouraged to vote in Memphis for many years. As a leading citizen remarked to the writer: "No one even thinks of interfering with Negro voting here." Today 82,000 Negroes are registered to vote in county and city out of a potential 119,000. This is a consideration which tends to liberalize all attitudes and decisions by public officials in matters affecting Negroes. Negro leaders are frequently consulted. Racist

demagoguery has been practically eliminated from Memphis politics.

A certain unity in the movement toward equal opportunities for Negroes, the prevailing policy of quiet, unsensational advance and rigorous, but generally fair law enforcement, have been mainly responsible for the accomplishments of the past three years. The turmoil in Little Rock and the damage to that city's economy in the late 1950's had a salutary effect upon the thinking of Memphians; Little Rock is only 139 miles away. A further helpful circumstance is the fact that Memphis, though lying in Tennessee's Deep South southwest corner, is in a state with a relatively liberal official attitude. Desegregation moves in Memphis run no risk of being repressed, but are rather encouraged by the state administration. Tennessee on January 1, 1964 established an official Commission on Human Relations, the only such body in any of the eleven former Confederate states.

Notable too is the high caliber of the leaders of the white community who are active in the Memphis movement. Former Mayor Edmund Orgill is conspicuous among them. E. B. LeMaster, president of the chamber of commerce when desegregation was getting under way, gave it strong support. Arthur W. McCain, president of the Union Planters Bank, now retired, and Edward J. Meeman, editor emeritus of the Press Scimitar,

have served successively as chairmen of the MCCR. George W. Grider, prominent attorney, now a candidate for Congress, is president of the Council on Human Relations; a former president of this group, Hunter Lane, is a member of the City Commission.

It is noteworthy, incidentally, that the most conspicuous white champions of racial justice in Memphis today, with a few exceptions, are over 50 years of age. Chairman Meeman is 74; many active leaders are in their 60's. Some who have retired from business or, like former Mayor Orgill, from politics are making a new career of furthering the city's peaceful transition to the new order. It is an interesting answer to those who fancy that liberalism is a monopoly of youth, and expect Southerners of the older generation to be chained to the traditions of the past.

Memphis has been free in recent years from organized segregationist activity of strength. A feeble Citizens' Council has an office and five so-called "chapters" in the city, with a not very prominent attorney, Richard T. Ely, as president. None of the higher echelons of business or community leaders are identified with it. It is making a rather furtive effort to embarrass integrated restaurants, but this campaign is making little impression on the general public. "The Citizens' Council doesn't amount to much here," is a common remark.

A recently-discovered Black Muslim temple in Memphis is generally regarded as a joke or a curiosity by both whites and Negroes. As many as 30 were reported to have attended one meeting in its small, shuttered, and tightly-guarded building at 364 Beale Street. Its leader, a young man calling himself "Nathaniel X," is voluble on the philosophy and theology of the group, but evasive as to practical details.

While Memphis has its full share of political controversy and rivalry, there is notable unity in the steady trend toward the elimination of discrimination against its Negro citizens. Motivations vary. A growing number support the change because "it is right." However, very many white people go along with it merely because "it is inevitable," and because it is better than having demonstrations or turmoil. There are differences of opinion as to the desirable tempo of change and on the question of race itself. But the city's course is set in a liberal direction and there is no strong effort in any quarter to bring the advance to a halt.

The mayor is gratified at the progress made and hopes it will continue. The press and the chamber of commerce are giving effective cooperation. The Restaurant Association, more than any other group, feels that it is "the sacrificial lamb" in the desegregation process and some of

its members are bitter, but for the most part they are anxious to hold the line for a united posture of non-discriminatory service. The Memphis Committee on Community Relations, whose leaders include some of the city's most respected citizens, is devoted to orderly adjustment to the new order. The Memphis Council on Human Relations, a biracial group, frankly committed to racial integration and working for interracial friendship and understanding, cooperates with the MCCR, and the two organizations have overlapping membership.

On the Negro side the unity is even more noteworthy. Only one of the principal action organizations is represented in Memphis and it completely dominates the field. White negotiators do not have to deal with rival Negro groups. When they have talked with the leaders of the NAACP, they "know where they stand" with the Negro community. The Memphis branch, with approximately 7,000 members, boasts the largest NAACP membership of any southern city. It formulates the Negro objectives, prods the white community, and marshals the Negro advance. The MCCR is the body in which the NAACP objectives receive biracial consideration and, generally, support. The Urban League, a Community Chest organization, is closely linked with both the white and the Negro communities. It cooperates smoothly with both the NAACP and the MCCR with efficient, but more routine, service in the employment field.

The Memphis Committee on Community Relations itself is preeminently an element of unity. The Chamber of Commerce, the churches, business and professional groups, civic organizations -- as well as the Council on Human Relations, the Urban League, and the NAACP -- are all strongly represented in it, and most public officials cooperate with it.

The Committee on Community Relations was established as early as 1958. Memphis Negroes, sharing the rising spirit of Negro militancy in the South, moved aggressively in agitation and demonstrations in 1960. But it was in 1961 that the walls of segregation began to crumble in a substantial way.

1960 and most of 1961 was a period of protest on the part of the Negro community, expressed in sit-ins, picketing, meetings, public statements, and law suits. Negroes protested their exclusion from the Memphis Automobile Show in a spirited meeting and urged a boycott of local automobile dealers. Since the annual Mid-South Fair was traditionally for whites only, the separate all-Negro Tri-State Fair was suspended "because of the spirit of the times." (The Automobile Show has since been discontinued, and the Mid-South Fair has been desegregated.) In a meeting with the City Commission in March, the Committee on Community Relations urged "constructive steps.... in the direction of desegregation" and the appointment of Negroes to various boards and agencies.

Meanwhile Negroes pressed in court litigation for desegregation of schools, buses, the municipal auditorium, museums, art galleries, golf courses, tennis courts, playgrounds, parks, and boat docks. The school integration "breakthrough" was effected with surprising tranquility in October 1961, when 13 Negro children were admitted to previously all-white public schools without incident.

The "Freedom" movement, as it was designated by the NAACP, continued and reached a crescendo in early November 1961. Regular picket and sit-in schools were held. Picketing and sit-ins were being staged daily; "Freedom Marches" and "Neighborhood Freedom Rides," weekly. Then, on November 14, the NAACP announced the suspension of demonstrations -- "as a result of favorable negotiations with downtown merchants." Some desegregation of eating places occurred shortly afterward. Desegregation of public facilities and places of public accommodation continued, under persistent prodding, and improvement was made in the employment situation and other areas during the ensuing two and a half years. November 14, 1961 was a milestone date. Since then demonstrations have been rare; the progress has been made by negotiation and conference and broad community effort.

Negroes in Public Office and in Politics

Although no Negro has been elected to public office in Memphis, a number hold appointive public offices. A milestone

was passed in 1961, when A. Maceo Walker, a Negro insurance company executive, was appointed to the important three-member Memphis Transit Authority; he was succeeded by another Negro upon the expiration of his term of office. The present city commission, elected last November, has given official responsibilities to no less than ten Negroes, as follows:

T. H. Hayes, Jr., member Transit Authority.

S. A. Wilbun, Assistant City Attorney.

Robert Lewis, member Alcohol Licensing Commission.

A. A. Latting, member Civil Service Commission.

Harold Whalum, member Traffic Advisory Committee

Whittier A. Sengstacke, member Memphis-Arkansas Bridge Commission.

Hollis F. Price, member Inter-Agency Health Committee.

Mesdames Calverta Ishmael, Margaret Rivers, and Ophelia Byas, members City Beautiful Commission.

Among Negro officials serving by earlier appointment are B. L. Hooks, assistant public defender (county), and Charles L. Dinkins, a member of the Memphis Hospital Board.

(At lower levels of city employment in Memphis, although statistics are not available, Negroes are heavily represented. Negroes have served the city from time immemorial in manual-labor capacities. Garbage collection, for instance, is largely a Negro activity.)

Three of the Negro appointees listed above, Hayes, Wilbun, and Latting, were nominated by William B. Ingram, the new mayor. In Mayor Ingram's election last November he is said to have had the support of both the Citizens' Council and the Negroes! In his former position of city judge he had been little identified with the desegregation movement, and the Citizens' Council, which has difficulty in finding sympathy with its aims in any political leader, decided that Mr. Ingram was more congenial than either of the other two candidates. Negroes in the lower income brackets were impressed with Mr. Ingram's record as judge and gave him their votes. Most Negro leaders supported the other candidates.

Interviewed in his office in City Hall, the mayor expressed pride in Memphis's progress in race relations and praised the work of the MCCR, which he hoped would go on to greater accomplishments.

A number of Negroes have run for public office in Memphis. Two received record-breaking votes last November, but none was successful in winning election. Assistant Public Defender Ben L. Hooks, running for judge of the city court, Division 3, was endorsed by the Memphis Commercial Appeal. He received 41,948 votes to 43,209 for Ray W. Churchill, a white attorney, the remaining 30,000 votes being divided among seven other candidates for the position.

Another Negro candidate, Dr. Hollis F. Price, running for a seat on the public school board, was endorsed by the Memphis Press Scimitar. In this two-man race, Dr. Price received 40,518 votes to 61,019 for his opponent, a white man. Three other Negro candidates, one for commissioner of public works and two for school board seats, received each from 30,000 to 35,000 votes.

Dr. Price, who is president of LeMoyne College and highly respected in both white and Negro circles, is an astute observer of the Memphis scene. He did not conceal his gratification at recent civil rights progress in that city. "Many Negroes avoid saying that things have improved," he said, "because so much more needs to be done and we don't want anyone to feel that we can stop where we are. But everybody knows we have come a long way in three years. I don't mind telling you I think it's tremendous!"

In public accommodations he felt that the battle had been practically won. The greatest danger now was that some of the gains might be lost by default. He said few Negroes were patronizing the newly desegregated restaurants, and he feared that some restaurants might drop back to segregation again. He was seriously considering a program under which LeMoyne students would visit desegregated restaurants systematically during the summer. "It might cost $700 or $800," he said.

Dr. Price attributed the civil rights progress in Memphis to the large Negro vote and to an unusual unity in the movement in both its white and its Negro leadership. The white business community was supporting the social change; its cooperation had "helped enormously" in the areas of public accommodations and employment opportunity and in city government and police attitudes. The agencies and individuals propelling the movement worked smoothly together.

There was virtually no dissension among Memphis Negroes, he said. An ably led NAACP was the dominant, and, in fact, the only action organization and the Negro community was united behind it. CORE, SNCC,and SCLC were practically non-existent as local entities. In the Memphis Committee on Community Relations Negro leadership and white leadership joined in an effective partnership; the NAACP often found it effective to work through the MCCR in pursuing its objectives.

Individual clergymen, both white and colored, had worked valiantly in the movement, he said, but the ministerial association as such had been of little help. The National Conference of Christians and Jews in Memphis, which earlier concentrated entirely on religious tolerance, had moved into the field of interracial brotherhood, especially in

connection with religious worship. Negroes are included in its Memphis Round Table and are invited to its annual dinners. It is putting on Sunday afternoon TV programs, with Negro participants, emphasizing brotherhood.

Dr. Price expressed a high opinion of the Memphis Council on Human Relations, of which he is a member. The MCHR is overshadowed by the MCCR as a reform mechanism, but the members of the former are more frankly dedicated, not merely to community harmony, but to the cause of racial justice and brotherhood.

Dr. Price said he had "great respect" for Claude Armour, the Memphis police and fire commissioner, a public figure who looms large in all civil rights discussion.

Schools

Memphis has had token public school integration since the fall of 1961. This year, 287 Negro children are enrolled in the four first grades of 14 predominantly white schools. No notable disorder has attended the mingling of white and colored children in the schools.

A suit seeking desegregation of the Memphis public school system was filed in federal court in March 1960. In a ruling of April 1961 District Judge Marion S. Boyd refused to order the immediate desegregation of the entire system, noting that the school board had expressed a desire to integrate

the schools through compliance with the state pupil assignment law. The case was appealed; but without waiting for further court action the school board proceeded with the first admission of Negro children to predominantly white schools the following October.

The public school "breakthrough" was typical of the insistence upon quiet procedure and the avoidance of sensation which has characterized the advance of Memphis on the whole civil rights front. The operation was carried out with a minimum of preparation or previous notice to the public. During the previous month the cooperation of the city's political and civic leadership and of the press was quietly secured. Brief public statements conveyed the suggestion, but not a formal announcement, that some school desegregation might be in the offing. The news media were definitely informed at a briefing the evening before the event; the president of the school board made it clear that full news coverage was desired afterward, but secured a promise from the press to withhold announcement until the children had entered school. The plan went off without a hitch. Neither reporters nor spectators were allowed in the vicinity of the schools during the first few days, but, on the critical first day, a press headquarters, set up across the street from the school board offices, was relayed information as fast as it came in from school authorities and police.

On March 23, 1962, the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit ruled that the state assignment law could not serve as a desegregation plan, and the Supreme Court refused to review this decision. Judge Boyd then ordered the school board to submit a new plan, and the board came forward with one for biracial classes in the first three grades, which the court approved. The school board proceeded to put its plan into effect the following September, enrolling eleven Negroes in the first grade, 21 in the second, and twelve in the third in schools with whites, bringing the total of Negroes in formerly all-white schools to 53. Judge Boyd rejected a NAACP plan for the desegregation of all grades by 1965 and he refused to order faculty desegregation. An appeal by the Negro plaintiffs from this ruling is still pending before the Court of Appeals, but in 1963 the school board extended desegregation further in accordance with its plan.

In the Shelby County public schools, six Negro children were admitted to one previously all-white elementary school in September 1963. A suit had been filed in June seeking desegregation of the county's school system, including the teaching staff. In February 1964, the court approved a county school board plan for the desegregation of all twelve grades in all schools in the fall of this year, with limited transfer privileges. Judge Boyd rejected a proposal of the

NAACP to require a 68-32 racial balance in all the county's schools. The public school enrollment in Shelby consists of 28,084 white and 13,216 Negro pupils.

Memphis State University has 250 Negroes among its 8,215 students, having admitted its first Negro students (eight) in 1959. The city's two Roman Catholic Colleges, Christian Brothers and Siena, are both integrated, each with three Negro students in attendance. The Presbyterian Southwestern College in Memphis has announced that it will be integrated in the fall of 1964. The Memphis Technical School, for both adult and high school students, has one Negro along with whites in day classes and ten in night classes. The area Vocational School, with classes from 4 to 10 P. M., is integrated.

Approximately 8,000 Memphis and Shelby County children are enrolled in Catholic parochial schools, including 612 Negroes, most of them in two all-Negro schools. Four grades were desegregated in September 1963, as part of a four-step plan to extend biracial classes through the ninth grade in 1966.

The limited nature of integration at Memphis State University has been a constant source of complaint by the NAACP, which contends that Negroes are still excluded from some recreational and other extra-curricular activities.

Only in April 1964, were Negro students admitted to full participation in the university's athletic program. Dissatisfaction with the public school situation has also simmered; last September it produced the only Negro demonstrations that Memphis has seen for the past two years.

There is growing impatience with the slow pace of public school integration, which is under litigation. In addition to that a dispute arose over a double-shift schedule at five Negro schools and over other school board policies. Several hundred Negro pickets paraded around the school board office repeatedly over a nine-day period before a truce was reached. The school board,while continuing the double-shift schedule, made a slight revision for greater pupil convenience and agreed to study its policy of hiring Negro teachers, to add distributive education courses to the Negro high school curriculum, and to consider the employment of Negroes in administrative offices.

The Negro demonstrations last September were orderly. There was no violence -- due in the opinion of some, to a large deployment of police. It was reported that the demonstrations had cost the city $9,000 in overtime pay for patrolmen.

The Memphis Committee on Community Relations

The Memphis Committee on Community Relations is a voluntary and unofficial group of civic leaders, with no

office and no paid staff, but its prestige is such that it is almost as effective as an official human relations commission. It has, in fact, accomplished more than some so-called "Mayors' Committees."

Originally the MCCR was not devoted to civil rights; it was even regarded by some of its early members as a means of arresting the Negro advance. It sought to preserve order and interracial harmony in the city, and -- with an increasing recognition of the necessity for change -- that remains its stated purpose.

The evolution of the MCCR is an interesting study. Its forerunner was a "Race Relations Committee," set up, with prompting from several city officials, in 1956. This group was biracial in composition, but it is a commentary on the earlier interracial climate that some of its white members were unwilling to meet with Negroes! It became necessary to divide the Race Relations Committee into two subcommittees, which met separately and then negotiated through chosen delegates. The emissaries from the white and Negro subcommittees met frequently and gradually became the committee itself.

The Race Relations Committee had become sufficiently "moderate" to arouse suspicion in the emotional atmosphere of 1958. When a prominent banker became its chairman, he was threatened with dismissal by his board of directors and,

in the ensuing unpleasantness, the Committee itself dissolved. After only a brief lapse, however, the new and stronger Memphis Committee on Community Relations was formed. The purpose of the MCCR, as stated in its charter and constitution when it was incorporated on January 26, 1959, is "to provide a meeting place for calm discussion and such responsible action as may be agreed upon to preserve order, under law, as interpreted by courts of competent jurisdiction and the peace, happiness and continued progress of the great and growing city of Memphis and all of its people."

When the sit-in movement erupted around the South in early 1960, the executive committee of the MCCR arranged a meeting with the mayor and commissioners of Memphis. The nature of this Committee's activities was forecast better in a formal statement, presented to the city's governing body at that time. This said in part:

> During the past year committees from our membership have been studying various phases of our community relations and have held meetings of our members and the Board of Directors. Concerned about the recent outbreaks and sometimes violent occurrences in other southern cities, and convinced that some prompt, positive steps must be taken to forestall the probability of similar occurrences in Memphis, our Board of Directors met on March 10, 1960. This meeting by resolution instructed the Executive Committee to request this meeting with you, to say to you that as you seek solutions for community problems our organization is ready now and in the future to serve you in any way that it can within the limitation of its charter.

> The Committee believes that goodwill and understanding in our community can best be promoted by planned, voluntary and constructive change. It is the feeling of our Committee that steps should be voluntarily taken in Memphis in the direction of desegregation. We believe that this is necessary for the ultimate welfare of our community.
>
> Furthermore, we feel that the Negro segment of our population is inadequately represented in local government and toward the end of rectifying this condition we respectfully request that the City Commission give consideration to the appointment of qualified Negroes to membership on the various boards of agencies which operate under the jurisdiction of the Commission.
>
> We were also instructed to assure you that when such appointments are made our organization will not only give its own full support, but will also use its best efforts to explain to all the citizens of the community the desirability and wisdom of such action.

Lucius Burch, the MCCR's first chairman, and the Rev. Paul Tudor Jones, a Presbyterian minister, Arthur W. McCain, a retired banker, and Edward J. Meeman, the men who have followed Mr. Burch, are four of Memphis's most prominent civic leaders. Former Mayor Orgill has been an active worker, as have Frank R. Ahlgren, editor of the Commercial Appeal, who is chairman of the subcommittee on public accommodations, and other outstanding citizens.

Mr. Meeman, the present chairman, is editor emeritus of the Press Scimitar, and he presides over the committee from his office in the Press Scimitar building. Rabbi James A. Wax, of Temple Israel, is the Committee's dedicated secretary. There are five vice-chairmen: former Mayor Orgill;

Mr. Ahlgren; Carl Carson, a businessman; Dr. Price; and Dr. Vasco Smith, Jr. The last two named are Negroes; Dr. Smith is also vice president of the NAACP.

Membership in the MCCR is open to all; approximately 150 members are now enrolled at a fee of one dollar a year. Meetings of the full membership are held only rarely and meetings of its board of directors are infrequent. An executive committee, meeting once a month, and various subcommittees do most of the Committee's work. There are, or have been, subcommittees on schools, libraries, hotels, restaurants, and employment. Meetings of these are held once a week or oftener while a project is under way, and are more or less suspended afterward. The employment subcommittee is now the most active, and it is permanent for the forseeable future. Approximately one-third of the 28 executive committee members are Negroes, and include both the president and the vice president of the NAACP.

The emphasis of the MCCR has been on quiet work behind the scenes. Many point to this fact as the secret of its success in the delicate matter of race relations. Much planning and negotiation take place without publicity. Substantial progress is often made in the fields of public accommodations and employment before the fact is generally known. This quietness of operation, of course, would not be possible without the cooperation of the news media, but

in Memphis the editors of the daily newspaper are leading exponents of the "quietness principle."

Mr. Meeman said that the Committee serves as an arena of compromise, with everyone speaking frankly. Once a decision is made, the group unites in the effort to put it into effect and the city and county governments usually ccoperate.

He said also that firm and fair law enforcement and the absence of disorder had made everything easier. He had high praise for Police and Fire Commissioner Claude Armour.

In 1963 Mr. Meeman received the National Human Relations Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. In accepting the honor at a Memphis meeting, he said in part:

> We have come to the next phase in race relations in Memphis.
>
> We have already accomplished more difficult tasks. We have desegregated buses, schools, libraries, and the art gallery, a university, parks and playgrounds, restaurants; what is now our task is less of a break with our traditions.... Our task now is to widen the opportunities for employment of our Negro citizens... Everyone is now agreed that Negroes should have the opportunity to obtain an education as good as that which is available to whites. Having been prepared to hold good jobs by this training, they should not be shut out from the opportunity to get them.
>
> When we upgrade a large portion of our population, the South will raise its standard of living, improve the labor supply, become an area with greater attractions to industry and

distributive commerce, and provide a greater prosperity for all of us who live here and the peace of mind that comes from friendship and cooperation between the races.

THE NAACP

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is the spearhead of the Negro push. Though it works through the Committee on Community Relations in the pursuit of many of its objectives, it furnishes a constant and necessary spur to that organization. The Memphis branch, with approximately 7,000 members, boasts the largest membership of any NAACP unit in the South. The figure for 1963 membership was 6,900; the initial success of the drive now under way suggests that the number will exceed 7,000 in 1964.

The Association's well-ordered Memphis office is run by Mrs. Maxine Smith, executive secretary, with several clerical assistants. Mrs. Smith is the wife of Vice President Vasco Smith. It is the busy office of a busy organization.

In addition to steady pressure in the areas of public accommodations and employment, the branch's regular reports describe an endless variety of activities: continuing litigation over public recreational facilities, schools, etc.; complaints to the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity; voter registration drives; and intervention in innumerable incidents and situations involving discrimination

against Negroes. Letters of congratulation are regularly sent to individuals and agencies making favorable moves, such as the appointment of Negroes to responsible positions. When congratulations are not in order, communications of a different kind go forth; for example, the NAACP protested to the Social Security Administration the ommission of courtesy titles in dealing with Negroes at its Memphis office, leading to prompt corrective action. Complaints of police mistreatment of Negroes, numerous during the agitation of 1961, are still handled from time to time.

Even as the situation improves, lingering prejudice against Negroes is manifested in public functions and in many small incidents spotted by a vigilant NAACP. In 1962 a receptionist at the out-patient clinic of the John Gaston Hospital erased "Mrs." from the identification card of a Negro patient in her presence, politely explaining that this was necessary to distinguish her from white patients! When the NAACP reported the incident to the hospital chief of staff (whom it finds cooperative) the latter took immediate steps to have the practice stopped.

Officially, city hospitals are now operating on a nondiscriminatory basis, but the NAACP finds much still to be done in this area. It has secured the removal of "WHITE" and "COLORED" signs from hospital toilets, desegregation of cafeterias and nurses' rooms, and the upgrading of some Negro

hospital employees. Yet discrimination remains in ward segregation, nurse training, and higher-level employment. The NAACP reported in January 1964 that "segregation is still deeply entrenched in city hospitals."

The prestige of the NAACP among the public in Memphis, both white and colored, is enhanced by the personality and stature of its president, Jesse H. Turner. Mr. Turner is firm and militant in the Negro cause, and at the same time, courteous and understanding. White persons remark that Mr. Turner, who is president of Beale Street's Tri-State Bank, "knows the businessman's problems -- he's a man we can talk with." Even restaurant operators, many of them resentful of the pressures which they feel forced them to desegregate, find comfort in the attitude of the NAACP president. They say that Mr. Turner could be relied upon to make the change gradual and to see that judicious use was made of the desegregated facilities, protecting them from being overrun by irresponsible persons.

Mr. Turner concedes that Memphis has made unusual civil rights progress in comparison with other Deep South communities. He expresses admiration for various white leaders of the MCCR. But his emphasis is on the shortcomings, on the mass of prejudice and discrimination still to be overcome. He says that much of the desegregation that has taken place has been only token and halfhearted.

The 287 Negro children in school with whites are only a handful out of 54,407 Negroes in Memphis public schools. (NAACP lawyers are pressing in the federal courts for complete desegregation.) Hotel desegregation is limited to rooms and eating facilities, and "not too many Negroes at a time"; Negroes are still excluded from bars, ballrooms, etc. City swimming pools are still closed to prevent desegregation. (This matter is also under litigation in federal courts.) Negro advances were being made on the employment front, but a steady unremitting campaign was necessary in that area. In the situation as a whole there was still a long way to go, but Mr. Turner was prepared to keep on fighting every step of the way.

The Press

The daily newspapers, the morning Commercial Appeal and the afternoon Memphis Press Scimitar, are not unqualified champions of civil rights. Both are opposed to the civil rights bill, although the Press Scimitar favors some kind of federal legislation in this field. (The latter applauded the Supreme Court decision denying jury trial to Mississippi's former governor and lieutenant governor.) On the local scene the two papers -- both in their editorials and in their news coverage -- have followed a policy of constant cooperation and of skillful encouragement in the campaign against race prejudice and discrimination.

Mr. Meeman described the press policy as one of keeping the public fully informed, but discreetly, without sensational reporting and with judicious timing of some announcements. Negotiations to secure the desegregation of places of public accommodation were not embarrassed by premature news of each individual move; likewise the opening of employment in one establishment is not made public while negotiations with a group in the same business are in progress. Instead, articles are published from time to time giving summaries of desegregation, and these are presented in language tending to make the public proud of the progress Memphis is making.

An article which appeared in the Commercial Appeal of May 21, 1963 is an example of this kind of reporting. Headed "Memphis Group Quietly Widens Negro Horizons," it said in part:

> Quietly during the last few months there has been a gradual increase in the number of job opportunities available to Negroes here, as well as a general upgrading in Negro employment.
>
> Without fanfare, Memphis' Committee on Community Relations has been holding conciliatory talks between white and Negro leaders, securing additional employment for Negroes in sales and other areas in large retail and specialty stores; in bread, soft drink, and beer distributing firms, and in similar fields of work.
>
> The new employment positions are in addition to a general increase in the status of Negro workers in areas in which they have long held jobs.
>
> There are now 16 Negro bus drivers employed by the Memphis Transit Authority. The Memphis

Police Department has 28 Negro officers, and interviews will be held tomorrow to select members of a training class expected to furnish 25 more.

The Sheriff's Department has three Negro deputies, and others are being added from time to time. Other agencies of city, county, and state governments are constantly upgrading employment opportunities for Negroes.

These changes in the community social structure have been achieved without incident, a major contrast with other Southern cities such as Birmingham and Nashville.

The following (May 20, 1963) is typical of the helpful reporting in the Press Scimitar.

Memphis has been outstanding in its peaceful desegregation.

The latest development in the peaceful change in Memphis, improvement in job opportunities, was preceded by gradual desegregation of public facilities, step by step, without discussion or violence.

Downtown theaters have been desegregated this year, quietly and smoothly. Patrons now see Negroes sitting where they wish in theaters and seem to think nothing of it. Negroes sat with whites when the Metropolitan Opera came to the Auditorium recently.

The Memphis branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has been strong in desegregation demands, but also reasonable. There have not been many demonstrations, and these were done peacefully. There have been none recently, despite demonstrations in Birmingham and other Southern cities. ....Among the first facilities to be desegregated in Memphis were the two railroad stations. This was done on federal order. It was done smoothly, and there are no longer separate waiting rooms or eating places. This dates back to 1955.

> There has been much desegregation since:.... The bus stations.... city passenger bus service.... Some city schools, libraries, the zoo, some public golf courses and other recreational facilities.... Many downtown eating places....
>
> A number of citizens have given and are still giving their time to help Memphis desegregate peacefully.
>
> This has helped make Memphis a model in peaceful desegregation.

Some events call for prompt reporting. Mr. Meeman recalled, for instance, that, when the city buses were desegregated, it was necessary to advise the public at once that the change had been officially made; otherwise the spectacle of Negroes suddenly taking seats where they had not been allowed before could easily have led to serious interracial disorder.

On the other hand, when the theaters were desegregated, the fact was not mentioned in the press until long afterward. The downtown theaters merely agreed privately to cease excluding Negroes; when the next Negroes applied they were to be sold tickets and admitted without discrimination. A few Negro leaders were quietly informed and Negroes began gradually to attend the theaters that had been previously barred to them.

Two Negro newspapers, the Tri-State Defender and the Memphis World, serve the Negro community. Edited respectively by Thaddeus T. Stokes and J. A. Beauchamp, they are staunch

supporters of the NAACP and the civil-rights cause.

Municipal Facilities and Public Accommodations

Federal court rulings impelled most of the earlier desegregation in Memphis, reflecting aggressive work on the part of the NAACP. Railway, airline, and bus terminal facilities, municipal parks, and other city-operated recreational facilities were desegregated in compliance with court orders. Public schools were desegregated in the shadow of federal court litigation in which NAACP lawyers were asking, and are still asking, for more extensive action.

In the matter of municipal facilities the Memphis litigation drew from the Supreme Court on May 27, 1963, a somewhat famous opinion, expressing impatience with the slow response generally to the condemnation of segregation in its 1954 Brown decision. In Watson v. Memphis the high court recalled that "it was almost eight years ago -- in 1955, the year after the decision on the merits in Brown -- that the constitutional proscription of state enforced racial segregation was found to apply to public recreational facilities." (Dawson v. Baltimore)

A suit was filed in May 1960, seeking desegregation of the city's auditorium, museums, art galleries, parks, golf courses, tennis courts, playgrounds, boat docks, and other recreational facilities. Some desegregation in this area

had already taken place at the time and the city authorities indicated an intention to continue the process over a period of years, at the slow pace it considered necessary to prevent public turmoil. More progress had been made by the time the Supreme Court dealt with the case in 1963.

The high court noted in its ruling:

> ....Memphis owns 131 parks, all of which are operated by the Memphis Park Commission. Of these, only 25 were at the time of trial open to use without regard to race; 58 were restricted to use by whites and 25 to use by Negroes; the remaining 23 parks were undeveloped raw land. Subject to exceptions, neighborhood parks were generally segregated according to the racial character of the area in which located. The City Park Commission also operated a number of additional recreational facilities, by far the largest share of which were found to be racially segregated. Though a zoo, an art gallery and certain boating and other facilities are now desegregated, about two-thirds (40) of the 61 city-owned playgrounds were at the time of the trial reserved for whites only, and the remainder were set aside for Negro use. Thirty of the 56 playgrounds and other facilities operated by the municipal Park Commission on property owned by churches, private groups, or the school board were set aside for the exclusive use of whites, while 26 were reserved for Negroes. All 12 of the municipal community centers were segregated, 8 being available only to whites and 4 to Negroes. Only 2 of the 7 city golf courses were open to Negroes; play on the remaining 5 was limited to whites....

The case was remanded to the District Court for appropriate action, and all of the public facilities mentioned above have now been desegregated. There was no turmoil or disorder. Only municipal swimming pools were closed; the constitutionality of that action is being challenged in federal court.

Incidentally, the Supreme Court uttered a reproof heard widely across the South: "Brown never contemplated that the concept of 'deliberate speed' would countenance indefinite delay in elimination of racial barriers in schools, let alone other public facilities not involving the same physical problems or comparable conditions."

Restaurants at railway, bus, and airline terminals were also desegregated under federal court orders, but for the most part privately operated facilities in Memphis -- theaters, hotels, restaurants, etc. -- were desegregated as a result of Negro pressure and the work of the MCCR and other liberal groups. After 18 months of sit-ins, etc., and the negotiations of November 1961, racial barriers were dropped at 28 lunch counters in various branches of ten department stores in February 1962. Prodding continued, and the targets broadened to include hotels, restaurants, and theaters. 1963 saw a wave of desegregation of such places.

The theater problem was approached in a spirit of general good will on the part of theater operators, but with great wariness of white protest and possible disorder. The NAACP addressed letters to the theaters in September 1962, asking them to cease barring Negroes. The theaters referred the matter to the MCCR and indicated a willingness to negotiate. All of this was handled discreetly, and a satisfactory agreement was reached.

Desegregation began in January, four theaters at first and then others, on an unpublicized "controlled" basis. The NAACP undertook to control the attendance of Negroes; it was asked to send a designated number to a designated theater at a designated time. No unpleasantness occurred; little attention was paid to the Negroes in the theaters, and the operation expanded. By February 25, Negroes were completely at home in ten downtown theaters which they had previously been forbidden to enter. The principal downtown hotels and motels removed racial barriers (though some of their facilities are still closed to Negroes) in concert, following an agreement negotiated under the auspices of the MCCR.

Restaurants began to desegregate slowly, only a handful at first. A long struggle and much controversy developed in this area, not only between the restaurants and the NAACP, but among the restaurant operators themselves. Each of these feared that upon opening his doors to Negro customers he would suffer from competition with the establishments which continued to serve whites exclusively. The dissension within the Memphis Restaurant Association reached such a point that by the end of 1963 the Association decided to have nothing more to do with the matter. But by then the battle for desegregation had been practically won. Forty

previously all-white establishments had opened their doors to Negroes. Five more restaurants took the step during the next two months and 30 moved simultaneously on February 27, 1964 bringing the total of desegregated restaurants to 75. By April the number had reached 100.

Few restaurant operators made the change cheerfully. In spite of an unmistakable trend toward a more liberal attitude toward civil rights in Memphis, many businessmen are supporting the trend because they consider it better than racial turmoil and because they do not want to resist a very respectable civic movement. Most restaurant operators are serving Negroes merely as a "lesser evil" than harassment from civil rights agitators and out of a sense of solidarity with their associates.

A prime example of this is Harlon Fields, proprietor of The Flame and The Pancake Man and president of the Memphis Restaurant Association. Mr. Fields expressed strong disapproval of restaurant integration in principle; he said "every one" of the Association's members was against it. Yet he had worked energetically to bring about united action in opening Memphis restaurants to Negroes. The Association had made a survey last year of a representative group of restaurants, and the study had led to a realistic conclusion that the loss of trade caused by Negro demonstrators was greater than the loss which could be expected to result

from removing racial barriers. It was a matter of dollars and cents.

The restaurants have also been under pressure from the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and, of course, from the influential Memphis Committee on Community Relations. As Mr. Fields saw it, "it was the people who had nothing to lose" who were pressing for restaurant desegregation.

The restaurants have lost money -- "all of them," he said -- both by exposure to demonstrations and by integration, and he added: "It is hurting business now." The damage was only slight in many cases -- a white customer walking out in a huff now and then; in other cases, he said, white trade had fallen off considerably and the loss had not been offset by Negro trade. According to Mr. Fields, "a well-dressed Negro alone" or mixed white and Negro parties did not matter, but the sight of a party of a dozen Negroes was sure to alienate white customers.

However, Mr. Fields found the influence of Jesse H. Turner, the NAACP president, effective and Mr. Turner cooperative. He said you could depend on Mr. Turner to "regulate the thing," if he was informed in advance.

Mr. Fields' main concern was the effort to secure united action by the Memphis restaurants. All, he felt, should be "in the same boat." It was unfair for a few restaurants to

profit at the expense of others by clinging to the white-only policy. The "hold-outs" in restaurant desegregation seemed to arouse his wrath as much as the civil rights movement.

He was also disturbed over the action of the Memphis Citizens' Council in circulating lists of still segregated restaurants. He had heard that it was preparing to distribute lists of the desegregated places also. He only hoped they hadn't enough money to give these lists wide circulation!

In other quarters there was little mention of the Citizens' Council restaurant guides; they did not appear to have had much impact. Restaurant integration seemed to be going much more smoothly than Mr. Fields indicated and was being increasingly accepted by the Memphis public.

Employment

Comprehensive data registering progress in the field of equal employment opportunity in Memphis are not available, but the progress has been large. Many business and industrial establishments have hired their first Negroes, or placed their first Negroes in superior positions, during the past several years. Most of this has happened during the past twelve months, and the opening of new employment opportunities for Negroes is still going on with increasing momentum.

This phase of desegregation businessmen like. Many employers, who were nervous and apprehensive of white

reaction at first, nevertheless welcomed the systematic effort to open jobs to Negroes in their industries. Those who have employed or upgraded Negroes are almost invariably pleased with the result.

Under the headline, "MEMPHIS PROVIDES MORE AND BETTER JOBS FOR NEGROES," the Memphis Press Scimitar reported on May 20, 1963:

> Increased employment opportunities are being given Memphis Negroes through action taken by many employers throughout the city.
>
> This includes upgrading of Negroes already employed and making jobs available that generally were not given Negroes in the past.
>
> The employment committee of the Memphis Committee on Community Relations has been working on this problem for more than a year, and the rate of increased employment has been stepped up recently.
>
> Most downtown stores have given better jobs to Negroes, including jobs as sales personnel. Some 25 to 30 stores are already participating, doing more than 60 per cent of retail business, a spokesman for the committee said.
>
> A number of other businesses, including soft drink bottlers, bakeries, supermarket groups and others are participating. The spokesman said more than 100 firms are participating, and already several hundred Negroes have received new jobs or been promoted in jobs previously not available to Negroes.
>
> The spokesman said that almost all firms are employing on a basis of character, aptitude and ability regardless of race. He said a check with participating firms reveals that they plan to add more Negro employees, and that they

> are well pleased with Negro employees so far. He said the companies have had few complaints about Negro employees.
>
> It was a surprise to the employment committee to find out that a number of firms had already started upgrading Negroes, before they were asked to do so by the committee. Some already had Negroes in supervisory capacities.
>
> The upgrading is expected to continue gradually, and expand until Negroes are giving their fair share of jobs for which they are qualified.
>
> An example of employment of Negroes is at the city-owned bus service, which put on one Negro bus driver two years ago, and now has 16, all doing satisfactory work.

There are now approximately 25 Negro bus drivers. In industrial plants, International Harvester, Otis Elevator, Southern Bell Telephone and other corporations have opened new positions to Negroes. Banks have employed a Negro here and there in a clerical capacity; the Memphis branch of the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank has two Negro clerks. American Airlines now has a Negro young lady at its ticket counter. A recent Retail Merchants Association survey showed these stores with Negro sales clerks: Graysons (1); Three Sisters (1); Perel and Lowenstein (4); Goldsmith's (9); Sam Shainberg Co. stores (9); and Pantage Drug Stores (14). These are in addition to Katz, Woolworth, and other variety stores. (A NAACP survey at the beginning of 1963 had found that Negro employment in such stores was almost completely confined to janitorial and related jobs.)

The Rev. J. A. McDaniel, who combines the duties of pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church with those of executive director of the Memphis Urban League, is one of the Negroes who is frankly elated over the progress being made. The change in the employment picture is particularly impressive when viewed from an office which had struggled for so long for small Negro gains. Mr. McDaniel finds that "things are moving now."

"I lost my secretary yesterday to the American Airlines," he remarked. "Of course I was glad. She will earn twice as much there, and it is a breakthrough for American Airlines."

The Urban League has a spacious office in a former residence on Beale Street, where Mr. McDaniel is assisted by Mack Arnold, assistant director, and Mrs. S. A. Owens, Jr., secretary. Mr. McDaniel is enthusiastic about the NAACP - MCCR - Urban League team work. He had high praise for the white leaders in the movement, who are heavily represented on the Urban League Board. "Seven or eight members of our board are members of the MCCR, including Carl Carson, chairman of the MCCR employment subcommittee," he said.

Incidentally, Mr. McDaniel praised the Memphis police: "They don't use dogs or firehose here." Referring to Claude A. Armour, the police and fire commissioner, he

said: "Claude has gained the respect of both races; he relies on the Negro vote, and he gets it." However, he added: "White and Negro leaders have worked together, so we haven't needed police too much."

Carl Carson, chairman of the MCCR's employment subcommittee, is at the center of the busiest and most fruitful phase of the movement for equal opportunity in Memphis now. He is the head of several Carson companies in the automobile rental field, and he begins with heavy employment of Negroes at all levels in his own enterprises. "Every one of them," he said, "is doing a bang-up job. You see that fellow at the counter? I can go away and leave him in charge." He said he had had some fear at first of losing white customers, that "some customer might walk out rather than do business with a Negro clerk." But he had lost very little business on account of his Negro employees at any time, loses none now.

Mr. Carson uses the hard-headed business approach in his persuasion of other employers. He emphasizes the advantages of interracial harmony in the community and the efficiency of Negro personnel. But his own motivation is on the basis of conscience and morality. A deeply religious person, he loves his fellow man and he joys in the crusade to break down the racial barriers which prevent Negroes from working in the capacities for which they are qualified.

The colored Carson employee who drove me back from his office to my hotel obviously idolized his boss. I remarked that Mr. Carson was a "fine man." "Whoo-e-e-e!" he exclaimed, as if he had no words to fit his own sentiment. "You think so too?"

Mr. Carson likened Memphis acceptance of racial integration to customer acceptance of mechanical improvements in earlier years of the automobile. He remembered when many customers refused to pay the extra charge for cars with self-starters; they thought "any able-bodied man ought to be willing to crank his own machine!" People are afraid of change, but they often liked it when they got used to it. He said employers who hired Negroes were almost invariably glad afterward that they had done so.

Mr. Carson said his committee occasionally meets with unpleasantness on the part of one or two "hold-outs" in a particular line of business after general agreement has been reached. These were sometimes angry at "all the pressure." Then a few weeks later one of them would call him up and ask if he could come and talk about hiring some Negroes!

The employment subcommittee approaches its problem systematically, with constant adherence to the principle of united action. Individual establishments are not approached at random but through negotiation, industry by

industry. Mr. Carson's committee concentrated first, for example, on the soft drink bottling industry, and a conference was held with representatives of all of the bottling firms. Similarly the milk dealers, bread suppliers, chain stores, etc., were tackled, each group in turn. Mr. Carson found that this plan works wonders. The employer is much readier to hire Negroes when he knows that the policy is being adopted at the same time by all his associates in the same line of business.

The Police

In a summing-up of civil rights progress in Memphis, the Press Scimitar aptly displayed as photos of the three key figures those of Arthur W. McCain, then president of the MCCR, Jess H. Turner, president of the NAACP, and Claude A. Armour, the police and fire commissioner. Commissioner Armour and law enforcement, which he directs and symbolizes, have had an extraordinary part in Memphis's adjustment to the new order in race relations.

In some cities the police have won notoriety by the mischief which their brutality and ineptitude have caused. In Memphis the police and their commissioner have achieved distinction of a different kind. In few cities have the police been so largely and so favorably identified with the civil rights advance. Public order has been maintained in Memphis -- tranquility in which negotiations could quietly

proceed and insurance against disorder which enabled desegregation steps to be confidently taken. With small exceptions, police brutality, which is incompatible with any durable public order, has been absent, but the police "mean business," and the public knows it.

Nearly everybody likes this. Segregationists say approvingly that Armour has kept the Negroes from getting out of hand. Negroes feel that he has protected them from racist fanatics. There are no bombings or cross-burnings in Memphis. Negro demonstrators are kept within bounds, but they are not harassed by white hoodlums.

Mr. Armour is a "tough guy." Again and again at signs of unusual agitation or of impending disturbance the police commissioner has sounded the stern warning:

"No law-breaking or violence will be tolerated. Anyone who attempts it, white or colored, will be arrested."

Memphis has learned that Mr. Armour means what he says, and would-be trouble-makers abstain. Incidentally, the commissioner takes no chances. He deploys police in numbers that some consider excessive. One hundred and sixty patrolmen were assigned as a precaution against interference with public school desegregation in 1961.

Some Negroes were handled roughly during the sit-ins of that year. Mr. Meeman recalled that the Negroes were not so fond of Armour then. There have been cases subsequently in which the treatment of Negroes by individual policemen

has aroused complaint. Editor Stokes cites instance after instance of "police brutality" from the files of the Tri-State Defender. But Mr. Stokes thought Commissioner Armour was "doing a good job" on the whole and that Memphis Negroes were fortunate in having him for police commissioner. NAACP President Turner -- in the midst of some argument with the commissioner -- was "not sure Negroes will support him again," but he believed that police behavior had been better in Memphis than elsewhere in the Deep South. Negroes generally express "respect" for the police commissioner and find no cause for complaint.

Paradoxically, this man, to whom the civil rights movement appears to owe so much in Memphis, may not be in sympathy with it. Some who know him say that he is privately opposed to racial integration (though the police force is integrated). His conversation throws no light on this point. He sums up his philosophy in the simple statement:

"I am a policeman."

And that is all that is necessary. For is it not the policeman, in the highest sense of the word, who makes all progress possible?

"I don't necessarily believe in this stuff," he told this writer. "But that doesn't make any difference. I'm a policeman." And a policeman he is, every inch of him. He has never been anything else. He entered the force as a patrolman in 1941, rose through various ranks to be chief of

police in 1949, at the age of 29. He was elected police and fire commissioner in 1950 and has been regularly re-elected since. Now he is also vice-mayor.

The sit-ins of 1960-1961 raised some new police and legal problems. Incidentally, those demonstrations were larger and more disruptive than many realized -- owing to the policy of the Memphis press of minimizing the publicity. Some say that Memphis had more sit-ins than any other southern city. Police action was harsh. Hundreds of Negroes were arrested, though nearly all of their cases were ultimately dismissed. In 318 cases in city court, 163 defendents were convicted and 155 of the cases were dismissed; 119 more of these cases were dismissed on appeal to the circuit court. Of 123 cases with state charges, 93 were dismissed.

Many Negroes, despite their kindly feelings toward Commissioner Armour now, look back upon his performance during the sit-in agitation with resentment. Some observers say that the commissioner's attitude toward Negroes has changed since. The attitude of many white leaders has changed during the past three catalytic years. Mr. Armour said that sit-in demonstrators were arrested only on warrant from the proprietors of affected business establishments. He was not quite clear on the legal points involved.

He expressed relief that "the police don't have this problem any more, because nearly all of the places are integrated."

The largest single mobilization of police was directed against possible white trouble-makers -- at the time of the initial public school desegregation in October 1961. Mr. Armour recalled that in a preparatory lecture to the 160-man detachment he directed them to arrest anyone who "gets out of line -- I don't care who it is." Speaking to men most of whom were themselves probably opposed to school integration, he added sternly: "Anyone who can't carry out this assignment, can hand in his badge." Public school desegregation was carried out with exemplary order and tranquility.

Incidentally, Mr. Armour remarked that three United States marshals appeared in his office the day before the event. He told them they would not be needed, and added: "If ever I ask for federal marshals, don't send me three, send me 300!"

The commissioner objected to "so much talk about race. To us," he said, "people are just violators or law-abiding citizens." Conversation with the assistant chief of police in charge of personnel and with several other officials confirmed the impression that the Memphis police department is permeated with the spirit of rigorous but even-handed law

enforcement. There is no instruction in race problems as such, only in the various types of disorder and the policeman's duty in the circumstances, whoever the offenders may be.

Referring to the MCCR, Mr. Armour said he cooperated constantly with it; he had helped to set up its forerunner, the Race Relations Committee. But he was careful to point out that his encouragement of negotiation was not because of any personal feeling about the race issue. It was because negotiation lessened the police problem.

The Memphis department has ten police dogs, none of which has ever been used in a civil rights disturbance. Mr. Armour did not say that none ever would be used in such situations, but that they would be used only as a "last resort." He told of a case when dogs were used to beat off Negroes who were trying to prevent police from arresting one of their number in a drunken brawl. (But most Negroes seem unaware the police dogs are ever used.) There have been Negro policemen in Memphis for the past 16 years; there are now 42 on the 900-man force.

The Press Scimitar in reviewing civil rights progress in Memphis said: "The conferences of citizens and officials were indispensable and invaluable to keep peace and order in a time of inevitable change, but these conferences could not have been enough. We had to have a police commissioner who would not play the demagogue but would enforce

the law without fear or favor. We had it...."

Approximately 1,000 persons attended a "Claude A. Armour Recognition Dinner" on April 30, 1964. The organizations working for race relations progress were heavily represented on the sponsoring committee which aimed at an attendance of 1,000. Former Tennessee Governor Buford Ellington was among the speakers for the occasion, who included also the president and the secretary of the MCCR and Negro leader A. Maceo Walker.

Memphis has not gotten around to the housing problem, though housing is becoming more segregated every day. Dr. Price remarked: "We haven't touched the housing problem. Nothing whatever is being done about that." White and Negro firemen serve in separate companies. Bowling lanes are segregated. There are imperfections in all phases of desegregation. The civil rights advance is still far short of the open society. But Memphis nonetheless has begun to shine as a beacon of reason and decency for the Deep South.

The cotton capital of song and story, the great port of "Ole Man River," is moving into the new era in race relations irrevocably and with a speed which almost startles anyone returning to the city after a lapse of years. The change in three years has been striking, that in 20 years almost unbelievable. Among the letters to the editor of the Commercial Appeal of April 12, 1964, was one from an Ohio lady which said in part:

My last trip to Memphis was in 1945, when I flew in as a hostess with Eastern Airlines. I cannot believe that the same people who lived there then, live there now....

I travel with my husband and as a stranger in town you can become aware of the underlying 'tone' of the town....

Although the Negro population surrounding the activities of the hotel bespeak a passing generation, the young generation of Negroes display the eager excitement of their new life.

Congratulations! Your city is beautiful, your buildings are exciting and your high moral conduct is apparent.

At Goldsmith's I tried on a hat. Sitting next to me was a beautiful Negro lady, trying on hats also. I laughed at my image in a strange piece of headgear that I had tried on. Simultaneously she placed a hat of strange proportions on her head and she laughed at her image in the mirror. We looked at each other and understood the reason for the laughter and we laughed together....

- END -